

Interview: Train singer Patrick Monahan
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Interview by Randi Neumann



Randi: So...How's the tour so far? Any fun stories to tell?

Patrick: It's a lot of fun. You know we haven't been here in a while so we have to restart everything and start fresh. There is some older fans that know who we are but really - we're starting new with new fans and every place is different.

But I'm crowd surfing every night and that makes it amazing...

R: Do you have a lucky pair of jeans or anything that you wear when you go on stage: What is it and why is it?

P: I have 3 necklaces. One represents love, one represents faith and one represents being grounded...and those are my lucky things.

R: I read a fan question on Twitter and that girl was asking if you bought any necklaces overseas already?

P: No, I didn't. My wife bought me this just recently, it's a crown because we have a crown on all of our albums and...so I love it. But it wasn't here...but if I found one here I would buy it. Do you know where I should find one?

R: No...and since today is fathers day everything's closed.

P. Ohh, that's why everything is so deserted today. It was unusual like I thought something was odd. And it's fathers day? What do they do?

R: yeah! Well, they simply drive around and get drunk.

P: Ah okay. It was mothers day on Sunday in the US.

R: Same here.

P: Here? Cool cool.

R: Okay, let's get back to topic. What do you think is the best phrase you ever wrote?

P: Uh.....You know...I don't know. But I know that in the song "This Ain't Goodbye" one of my favourite lyrics that I ever wrote was "This ain't goodbye this is just where love goes when words aren't warm enough to keep away the cold". It's just kinda cool. It's an interesting idea.

R: Oh yes...

P: I am a genius. I didn't even think about it till now.

R: You are. So how many songs did you write all in all for the new record "Save Me, San Francisco"?

P: Well, you know we acquired so many songs from the past and that were current that it were about 80. And most of them were shit. Crap. Scheiße. But some of them were good so we made a record with the ones that are good.

R: I can tell they are good, I like the record very much. I just have it since two days but...

P: Do you have a favourite?

R: I like "Words" very much.

P: Yeah, we'll play that tonight.

R: Perfect. And "Marry Me"!!!

P: We haven't played that in Europe...there are 3 favourite songs on I-Tunes in the US. It's "Hey, Soul Sister", "If It's Love" which is our current single in the US...and "Marry Me" is the third. "Save Me, San Francisco" gets a lot of love too but "Marry Me" is big, yeah.

R: Maybe you should think about playing it in Europe. Maybe tonight?

P: You think so?

R: Maybe! (wink)

P: Because you want it?

R: I would love to hear it!

P: Really? "Marry Me"?

R: YEAH!

P: Okay. Alright. I don't mind.



R: cool, thanks.

P: But if we don't do it I know you'll be mad at me. I'll do my best!

R: Okay, cool! Yay!

We already talked about "If It's Love". Pete Wentz directed the new video. How was working with him?

P: Pete is a sweet, really talented guy. I like him a lot. I have a 20-month old daughter and she was there the whole time. She held on to Pete like he was her mommy. Like she would not let him go. She would hold him and hug him and it was so adorable. I can only imagine that the children know..kind of you know...maybe...innocent souls. And she knew Pete was really special. We wanted to make a video that showed our sense of humour and no one was gonna do it better than Pete Wentz.

R: It's definitely a fun video!

P: Thanks!

R: In "If It's Love" you say you would get your girl "everything except cologne cause it's poison". So which perfume do you like on a girl? How should she smell like?

P: I don't like perfume on a girl. Have you ever gotten into an elevator with someone that you were just like "What?! You know you're hiding something and all you had to do is take a shower or wash your clothes. And then you don't need to pretend like you're clean."

R: So you don't wear perfume as well?

P: I don't.

R: "Hey, Soul Sister" went number 1 in several countries. How do you measure success. Is it all about the record sales or is there something more rewarding than that?

P: Well I used to and that was the problem with the band. I think what happened was "Drops Of Jupiter" was so big that we were able to afford a different lifestyle and so we started to accumulate things and measure success by those things that we accumulated. And that is a bad idea. So we had to learn that money isn't everything and hit songs are definitely not everything and they're not success. Because we proofed it. We proofed that trying to write hit songs is not gonna make you successful. Success really is loving what you do. What we needed to do is re-evaluate and make some changes so that we could love what we do again. We have a new manager that really helped me a lot. I was just about done with music and he made me feel like I have a lot more to offer and that was very rewarding because he was right. And he was right before I knew it. I'm really grateful for him and we learned how to love music again. It's fun to have a hit because we put a lot of love into it.

R: "Hey, Soul Sister" is also the title-song for a German movie called "Vincent will meer". What do you think about that?

P: That was the first European thing that happened for us. In the past we lost touch with Europe and the importance of coming here. And you know like tonight we're gonna play in front of 300 or 400 people which is not a lot of people in one sense. But if you're coming to a town you haven't been to in many years it's a lot of people. So to us it's a successful journey. And starting before "Hey, Soul Sister" was showing signs of being a big hit ...well it was showing signs of being a hit but not a massive world explosion. And there is a movie in Germany that said we wanna use the song and we were like "Perfect. That's the perfect avenue to try to get the song out in Germany". So it was great for us, we loved that.

R: But you didn't see it. Well it's in German but maybe you did?

P: I saw a trailer of it but not much more. But that's okay...at that point we weren't interested. It could have been a porno. I don't care.

R: I heard that way more young fans attend this tour. Is it all because of that song? (Hey, Soul Sister)

P: I think so. It's because of the song but also the album. I think we made a record that is more pop. It's a rock/pop record. It's kind of getting back to the nature of the band instead of the grown up songs we had in the last few years. That's not really who we are.



R: When you started about 15 years ago there was nothing like Facebook, Twitter and all those social networks. Bands can be way more interactive with their fans nowadays. How do you like that trend?

P: I think it's cool. I used to have to send smoke signals when we started that's how long ago. So I would just have a blanket and a fire... ☺
It's cool! We have really great fans. We're not the kind of band that is like Justin Bieber where teenage girls want to rip our faces off or our clothes. We are different. We have teenage girls and guys coming to our shows but we also have adults come – they just love our music. It's not an image thing. It's the music. So keeping in touch with them is really easy and fun and cool and they're really nice. Sometimes it's a lot of work. I've been crowd surfing so we take a picture of it or people holding cell phones up in different countries and we take pictures. Or in front of the Eiffel Tower in Paris and we send it to all of our fans. That's fun. We never could have done that 10 years ago.

R: It's a lot of work but I think it's definitely worth it.

P: I think it is, yeah.

R: Fans is all you need.

P: Yeah, well, I'm a fan of music and I'm a fan of things. And to think that there are groups of people that feel that way about what I do is really cool.

R: What do you think about people getting your music illegally through the internet? Do you support the thesis of "Art should be a gift for everyone" and therefore free?

P: Well, I'm not as one-sided in that. I suppose that teenagers are not gonna buy our music. A very few of them are gonna buy our music. They know how to get whatever they want for free. Adults don't know as much about the internet and hot o kind of cheat the system so they buy things. I can afford to buy things so I buy them. Kids don't and can't so they get it. The confusion for me is that a kid can somehow get a computer, so you can afford 2.000 Euros to get a computer but not that 99 Cents to get a song. Basically for me I would rather get people music for free and come and see our shows but I ...one way or another. I don't have a strong opinion. I pay for my music. But kids would think that's stupid. How long will the compact disk be here? Is it another year maybe?

R: What was the craziest thing you had to sign?

P: I signed a women's shoulder in the US and I saw her a few months ago...I signed it 2008 and she..

R: Tattooed it?

P: Tattooed it! Crazy. Wild.

R: Was that the first person you met who tattooed your signature?

P: yeah.

R: Really?

P: I think so.

R: Isn't that almost kind of "normal" today?

P: Is it? I don't know, it wasn't normal to me. I mean that's a big commitment. On your skin ...you know I tried to do it really nice.

R: A lot of the Tokio Hotel and Teenie band fans probably have some band related tattoos.

P: Who?

R: Tokio Hotel fans. Do you know that band?

P: The who fans?

R: Tokio Hotel. Never heard of them?

P: Oh I do...heard of them but never met them.

R: well, however. Tattooing such things is...weird.

How comes you always use those pictures/drawings for your covers instead of band photos? Don't you like seeing yourself?

P: We feel like band photos maybe is a little bit boy bandy...and art is more representative for the kind of music we make. That's the rock'n'roll in us more than the pop. ...the images, the icons should represent the album not the band faces. It's just a cool way to represent something. It's like if you go to a restaurant, you see a menu and the art of the menu tells you the food is gonna be good.

R: True. If you ask non-German people what they associate with Germany it's always like "Bier, Sauerkraut, Bratwurst, Oktoberfest" and stuff. What are your associations?

P: I have several really great German friends and my mother her father was 100% German and her mother was Irish. So I am a quarter German.

R: So maybe it feels a little bit like home here?

P: I'm mostly Irish and when I go to Ireland or Germany I don't know that it feels like home but I love both places. There is a sense that German people...well that there is a particularness about them, that they are straight forward and always getting it done. And I don't find that at all. When I come to Germany they're always the nicest people I meet in all of Europe...they have a great sense of humour and the food is really wonderful. The architecture and everything is astounding but it's mostly new you know because of all the destruction that happened. I love Germany a lot! I really do!

R: Is there any question you are like sooo annoyed of?

P: No, I used to get annoyed when "Why the name Train?" came up but I don't care. It's not a question that offends me. You know there's a question now that happens to come up in the US a lot and that is "So, with the success of Hey,Soul Sister: How surprised were you?" and I always say "Not as surprised as you!". That's my answer.

R: That's a good one. And is there any question you hope that someone asks you?

P: I don't know...I don't know. Sometimes there are just excellent questions that I go like "Wow, thank you for thinking about it at all" and that happens mostly in Europe to be honest. Like people who live everywhere from London through Italy, it doesn't matter – there's a great sense of getting to know music on a deeper level. Not just "You have really cool melodies"...it's more like "When you were singing these parts "or you know "This sounds like these five bands - do you connect with them?"...those are like super cool questions because they're very musical and a lot of times it's so much different from how we see it and so it's a little bit eye-opening for us. But I don't think there's anything I haven't been asked that I hoped I get asked. Except for "Hey, do you wanna see me naked?" That would be cool! Not from you especially I mean just like in general...haha...like from a dude or...haha..

R: Ookay, maybe we should just continue...maybe this is THE question: Do you like cows?

P: Cows??? I don't eat cows. I feel bad for them. I feel bad for cows to be honest. But I like them. Why did you aks me that???

R: I'm just curious...haha, well, it's our typical question.

P: Really? And do people usually say they're delicious?

R: Most of them just say some...weird...things.

P: Cows are probably smarter than humans. They just can kind of relax all day. I like monkeys. I was just in Costa Rica and there were monkeys in the tree. Sooo amazing. Go to Costa Rica!

R: Yeah?

P: Yes!

